

Started from ground zero....

“Universities are collections of independent academic entrepreneurs who are brought together over the common grievance of parking”

Clark Kerr, Founding President
of the University of California System

Exploratory Center in Behavioral Economic Epidemiology (BEE)

University of California, Berkeley
University of California, San Francisco



Much of health is determined by behavioral choice

- Prevention, Risk taking, Treatment Adherence
- Not one time, but life long
- Success of many technologies depends on it
 - Chronic diseases & HIV/AIDS
- Existing disciplines have independent lines of basic research on same behaviors
- None have independently lead to **successful, sustainable & scalable** solutions

Youth Sexual Risk

- HIV, Other STIs, unintended Pregnancy
- Reduced education, livelihood & poverty
- What does not work
 - Knowledge of risk
 - Just say no
 - Condom distribution
- Behavioral science, Economics & Epi have large independent and incomplete literatures

BEE Goal & Approach

- Understand & address youth
 - risk behavior
 - vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, other STIs, and unintended pregnancy
- Integrate aspects of behavioral science, economics, and epidemiology (BEE)
- Integrate both basic and applied aspects

From Basic to Applied Approach

- Understand basic biological, cognitive, motivational, and socio-economic explanations
- Use these to design & pilot interventions that affect behavioral choices
- Find ways to that governments and NGOs can cost-effectively intervene at scale

Participating Institutions

- University of California, Berkeley
- University of California, San Francisco
- National Institute of Public Health (Mexico)
- Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore
- Muhimbilli University, College of Health Sciences (Tanzania)

Participating Basic & Applied Disciplines

- Economics
- Epidemiology
- Behavioral Science
 - Anthropology
 - Psychology
 - Sociology
- Clinical/Lab Sciences
- Demography
- Political Science
- Public Policy
- Public Health
- Business/marketing
- Governments
- Donors

Initial Challenges to Integration

- language
- Integrative model
- Differing views on establishing Causality
- Efficacy vs. effectiveness
- Linking theory & lab into field studies
- Translating basic science into sustainable & scalable interventions

Strategies for Integration: Trans-formative (-gender) Cross-talk

- Interdisciplinary management of process
- Seminars
- re-analysis of existing research and data sets
- Co-authoring papers
 - Integrated theoretical framework paper
 - Methodological cross-talk paper
- Pilot studies in the lab & field

Specific pilots

- Experimental Lab study
 - risk formation across cultures & economic status
- Mental health, SES, future expectations on sexual practices in Mexico & India
- Poverty alleviation program in Mexico
- Livelihoods projects in Dominican Republic, Zimbabwe, Tanzania
- Financial incentives to stay negative, Tanzania

Obstacles to Interdisciplinary Research

- How to Change rules while old rules still apply
- Poor career incentives for interdisciplinary work
 - Tenure and promotion
 - No clear path for interdisciplinarians
- Incentives for senior faculty to mentor junior interdisciplinary investigators
- Differing incentive structure

Obstacles to Interdisciplinary Research

- Few viable funding prospects
- No obvious peer reviewed journals
- Pressure to publish in own discipline, particularly for junior investigators
- Writing style is different in each discipline

Strategies to Promote Interdisciplinary Research

- Is interdisciplinary training a good idea?
- Training
 - US-Mexico program funded
 - Developing UCB/UCSF interdisciplinary doctoral program in health research
- Discussions w/ promotion & tenure committees
- Meetings with editorial boards to advocate for special interdisciplinary issues (e.g. EDCC)

What's Next?



Win the Roadmap award!